THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Requests have been received for introduction of flight between Bagdogra and Kathmandu. However, due to operational constraints at Bagdogra Airport as well as constraints of aircraft availability. Indian Airlines is unable to consider introduction of flights between Bagdogra and Kathmandu at present.

As regards air services on domestic sectors, Government has laid down route dispersal guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the need for air transport services of different regions of the country including North-Eastern region. It is, however, up to the airlines to provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability. As such, the airlines are free to operate anywhere in the country subject to compliance of route dispersal guidelines issued by the Government.

Passenger friendly amenities at airports

2174. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken to make the International tourists more comfortable and passenger-friendly at our airports;

(b) whether it is a fact that our infrastructure as well as hospitality quotients have found themselves unprepared to meet rising inflow of tourists;

(c) whether Government have any contingency plants to meet these fast growing infrastructure requirements; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) At all major international airports namely, Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Trivandrum, Hyderabad, Bangalore. Ahmedabad and Goa, user friendly facilities are provided. These facilities are upgraded continuously to ensure that the terminal buildings are more passenger friendly and international tourists are able to receive more courteous services.

(b) to (d) Due to increase in traffic, there is sometimes congestion at some of the metro airports, especially, during the peak hours. Government is following an aggresive policy for modernization, upgradation and development of Airport infrastructure in the country. The metro airports of Delhi and Mumbai are being restructured through joint venture route to international standards. Government has also approved construction of greenfield airports of international standards at Hyderabad and Bangalore with private participation. Airports Authority of India have also decided to develop tentatively selected 25 non-metro airports by development of airside and cityside facilities. At several airports measures were taken to improve aesthetics and housekeeping of terminal building and cityside focussing on improving general cleanliness, improvements in toilets, florring, signages, lighting, interior decoration, trollies, airconditioning and horticulture. Central Industrial Security Force inducted in place of local State police at airports for security check, have also been given training in courteous handling of passengers.

Independent Civil Aviation Authority

2175. SHRI ANAND SHARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to establish an independent Civil Aviation Authority to oversee the civil aviation sector; and

(b) if so, the structure of the proposed Authority and the date by which it will become operational?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and(b) There is presently no proposal to establish an independent Civil Aviation Authority to oversee the Civil Aviation Sector. However, Government is considering to set up an Airport Economic Regulatory Authority, which is, *inter-alia,* expected to deal with tariff and service standard at airports. The setting up of the Regulatory Authority will require an enabling legislation. However the Directorate General of Civil Aviation will continue to look after other regulatory functions.

Entry of private sector players in ATF supply at airports

2176. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state: